

March 7, 1973

SPEAKER: The chair next recognizes Senator Stahmer, then Anderson.

SENATOR STAHMER: Mr. President and members of the body, I'd like to support the Senator Syas' move and I'd like to interject another element into this, if I might, because I think it is a very important element and might otherwise be overlooked. This country is being faced increasingly with a gasoline shortage. Increasingly, we are having to rely on the importation of gasoline and fuel oils from foreign countries. Increasingly, this is leading to a balance of payments deficit and there was an advertisement by, I believe, one of the gasoline companies in Time and other magazines that indicated that within twenty years that balance of payments deficits for fuels alone might run as high as \$25,000,000,000. Now I think it is of the best interest economically of this country if we take advantage of mass transit in cities and save and best utilize what gasoline resources we have, and if we want to foolishly and flagrantly waste our resources and let everyone run around in private cars and burn up all our gas until we have none of it left and we are completely dependent upon fuel oil and gasoline from foreign countries which will cost us tremendous billions of dollars and cause an economic decline in this country, so be it. But I think the members of this body ought to pay close attention to our shrinking resources before they arbitrarily discard the thought of supporting mass transit in metropolitan areas.

SPEAKER: The chair recognizes Senator Anderson. We are still speaking on the Syas amendment.

SENATOR ANDERSON: Mr. President and members of the body, I rise in support of Senator Syas' amendment. I realize that it's a little bit incongruous for a Senator representing a rural area to be supporting or talking in favor of mass transit, but actually I think that the failure of people all over the country to look favorably upon mass transit is a rather shortsighted action. I think that as long as we continue to insist on tying our transportation system to the car we are going to keep perpetuating this problem. We are never going to solve it. Mass transit actually helps us address ourselves to the problem of how we are going to solve our highway problem. If we can...if we insist on tying our transportation system to the car, we put ourselves in a position where we are going to have to continue building more and more freeways in areas like Omaha at continued additional expense. So I think that mass transit does offer some very tremendous advantages in helping us to address ourselves to the highway needs of rural areas. I think there is another ultimate application that we really haven't heard discussed very much in terms of application of mass transit to rural areas, and this is the possibility that mass transit could be extended to rural areas of the country to the point where it would provide an alternative to automobile transportation, particularly, to answer the needs of elderly people, persons who cannot use the automobile and are really looking for an alternative. So, I think that to fail to look at mass transit, to address ourselves realistically to this thing, is a shortsighted action. I think that in the end it would be to the detriment of our entire highway system as well.

SPEAKER: The chair recognizes Senator Stull, then Kremer.

SENATOR STULL: Mr. President and members of the Legislature, I'm speaking against the Syas amendment and I was quite surprised to hear Senator Syas get up here on this floor of the Legislature and even suggest that automobiles in Omaha doesn't travel any mileage in our reallocation of highway funds. The automobiles in Omaha or any county, wherever they might be in the state of Nebraska, carries the same weight, and I'm